



## Sustainable, powerful fashion transformation in the 'new normal'

### Driving deep sustainability with technology

Covid-19 has massively disrupted fashion businesses' daily operations and sales strategies. Having the right technology is essential to survival

Since the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic, fashion businesses have suffered enormous operational and financial strain. Lockdowns worldwide have mandated an overhaul of daily processes, eliminated exhibition opportunities and curtailed essential sales routes.

For smaller brands, the initial shift was towards home working and managing disparate workforces. Andrea Mené, managing director at the fashion technology business Zedonk, describes that process as "a big challenge for fashion brands whose businesses were driven by face-to-face interactions". He adds: "In terms of maintaining core processes

and working together efficiently, it's certainly been a difficult transition for many, but made easier for those who implemented technology early on."

Traditional fashion shows and sales channels have also been heavily impacted by lockdown rules. "The wholesale landscape has completely changed with no physical shows or presentations," Mené explains. "Consumer sales routes have also been changing – with brands needing to sell remotely and online using systems such as Zedonk. More effort has gone towards direct models, but as lockdowns ease, they've simultaneously needed to work on getting back to excellent bricks-and-mortar experiences."

With coronavirus likely to remain a factor in all our lives, brands now need to harness future-proof ways of working that are supported with powerful technology. For smaller fashion firms, many of which still manage their operations from spreadsheets, it is imperative to consider enterprise resource planning software hosted in the cloud to provide adaptability, affordability, and optimal process efficiency.

"ERP is essential in allowing each department to fulfil its role without disruption, saving time and money by streamlining processes, and cutting out costly manual mistakes," notes Mené. The technology also boosts a brand's efficiency by automating repeated steps, and allowing status and performance reports to be downloadable in seconds.

Over 1,000 small and medium-sized fashion brands across 45 countries

work with Zedonk's cloud ERP system to manage growth and prepare for the future. The system is modular, so it covers different sizes and types of business, and seamlessly integrates development, sales, production, inventory, allocation, logistics and reporting functions. It also contains a new virtual selling module that allows brands to showcase collections, communicate with retailers and receive orders. By being dedicated completely to the fashion industry, the quick-to-integrate ERP system allows brands and designers to run daily operations without disruption, in contrast to generic alternatives that require extensive customisation.

As countries look towards a 'new normal', Zedonk is ensuring it remains at the forefront of change in the fashion industry by constantly engaging with fashion firms, business incubators, industry associations and education institutions. "Brands are adjusting to the new ways of working and seeking to ensure they are future-ready," Mené concludes. "Using a dedicated, efficient ERP system that meets their needs will be essential to success."

To find out more about harnessing cloud ERP to support powerful growth post-pandemic, visit [zedonk.co.uk](http://zedonk.co.uk)

**zedonk.**

**158k**

sales orders created

**27m**

units on sales orders

**£4bn**

worth of sales orders

## Q&A

### Powerful transformation beyond the pandemic

Fashion brands face enormous demands to improve their environmental and ethical credentials. **Luca Tonello**, sales director at Dedagroup Stealth, explains how technology will transform impact

**Q** What are the main sustainability challenges for fashion brands?

**A** Water consumption, carbon emissions and ethical production. The industry uses around 1.5 trillion litres of water annually and generates roughly 23 kilogrammes of greenhouse gases for every kilogramme of clothing produced, while there are important questions around employee conditions across the global supply chain. Luxury brands may buy 'sustainable' materials but struggle to audit suppliers. Fast fashion brands may find it tough to cheaply source sustainably and ethically. Online brands' high return rates augment the carbon damage from goods delivery. There is a long way ahead for the right business models, supported by technology.

**Q** Are these pressures likely to increase quickly?

**A** Yes. The fashion industry has complex processes, among the most harmful to the environment in terms of carbon emissions, water usage and waste. While there are still only a few formal regulations targeting the sector's sustainability, we expect many more as initiatives are formulated globally. The industry knows to change before being compelled. In mature markets, consumer behaviour is further pressuring transformation.

**Q** What response are you seeing from fashion houses?

**A** Beyond initial commitments, brands are now embedding sustainability with dedicated teams. There are also significant industry initiatives such as the Sustainable Apparel Coalition, raw materials data's HIGG Index, The UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion and the 2019 Fashion Pact aimed at improving employee conditions and environmental impact. But fashion businesses struggle to consolidate and interpret the raft of internal and supplier data, often relying on spreadsheets. Without the right tools, it is impossible to achieve proper transparency and change.

**Q** How can technology be used to transform sustainability?

**A** Having the right technology is essential in tracking and measurement, beginning with the traceability of materials and evaluation of production

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suppliers, and carrying on through the business to the consumer. Technology that collects and analyses this data well is an enabler of circular, sustainable business models. It helps companies manage and understand information across entire lifecycles of products, empowering better choices. The right tools must be actively embedded into regular workflows to maximise impact.

**Q** How does Dedagroup Stealth help?

**A** We are completely focused on the fashion market. Our Stealth Platform is used by 60% of the top iconic Italian brands and now contains an advanced sustainability module, which collates standardised data from the Higg Index, augmenting it with businesses' own sustainability information and key performance indicators. By integrating this into all workflows, we enable companies to consistently make the right choices. Fashion brands across Europe are using Stealth, the Fashion Platform to manage their processes along the supply chain and distribution channels, and also to measure sustainability. They include Fendi, whose dedicated team has moved from manual data uploads to our analytical dashboards empowering sustainability across clothing, shoes and leather goods. For all fashion brands, the future lies in introducing sustainable business models enabled by accurate and transparent technology.

To find out more about how to reshape the fashion industry with technology, visit [dedagroupstealth.com](http://dedagroupstealth.com)

**DEDAGROUP**  
**STEALTH**